

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 18, 2005

The Honorable Charles H. Taylor
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Interior and Environment
B308 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Norman D. Dicks
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Interior and Environment
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Taylor and Ranking Member Dicks:

We are writing to support the President's requested funding level for the USDA Forest Service's Forest Legacy Program in the Fiscal Year 2006 budget. A cost-share program created in 1990, the Forest Legacy Program has assisted states and local partners to protect more than one million acres of environmentally important forest areas from conversion to non-forest uses.

The Forest Legacy Program purchases titles or conservation easements in order to prevent development on important private lands. As privately owned land is increasingly developed, natural resource based economies lose their sustainable supply of forest products and communities lose a healthy environment rich in recreational possibilities. Forest Legacy allows landowners to work with the State and Private Forestry branch of the Forest Service to establish natural resource management plans. Tracts of land may be restricted from development and kept in their natural state, or they may remain "working forests" that can be used for timber harvesting. These tracts are chosen for preservation based on excellent recreational opportunities, historical importance, water quality, or wildlife habitat protection.

Forty states and territories currently participate in the Forest Legacy Program, and six states and territories are preparing applications to join the Forest Legacy Program in the future. States requested \$219 million in funding for FY2005. Last year the Administration's Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) assessment gave the Forest Legacy Program the highest score of any U.S. Forest Service program, confirming that the program has strong management.

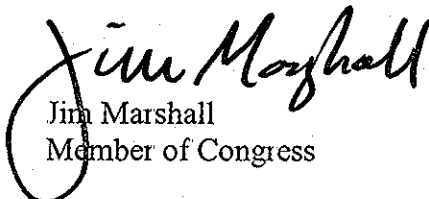
The President's FY2006 budget proposes to increase funding to \$80 million, declaring that the Forest Legacy Program "maintains the integrity of our country's valuable forest lands." We believe that the President's requested funding level is a responsible step toward meeting existing demand of \$219 million.

Thank you for your consideration. We sincerely appreciate your support.

Sincerely,



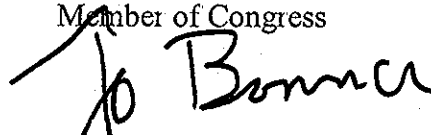
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Charles Bass
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Isiah Bonner, Jr.
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Jim McDermott
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Mark Green
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John M. Spratt Jr.
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Jeb Bradley
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Neil Abercrombie
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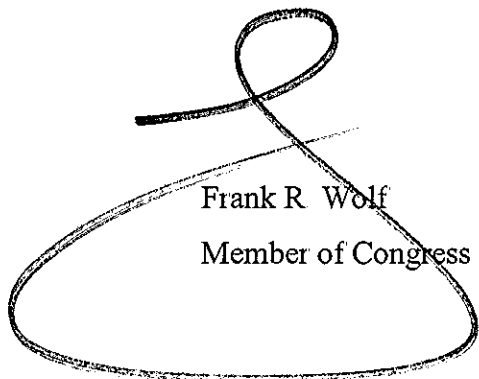

Tammy Baldwin
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Christopher Chabrys
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Virgil Goode Jr.
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Raul Grijalva
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Rush Holt
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Frank R. Wolf
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David Scott
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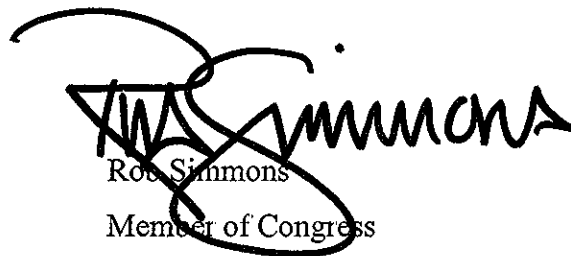
Ed Case
Member of Congress



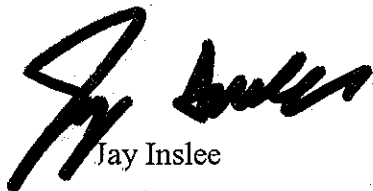
Michael Michaud
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Mike Thompson
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Rob Simmons
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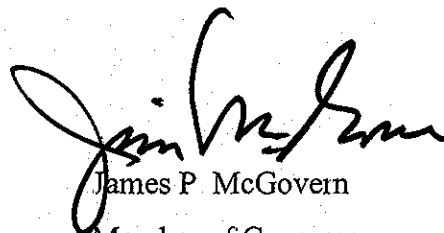
Jay Inslee
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Jim Gerlach
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Frank Pallone, Jr.
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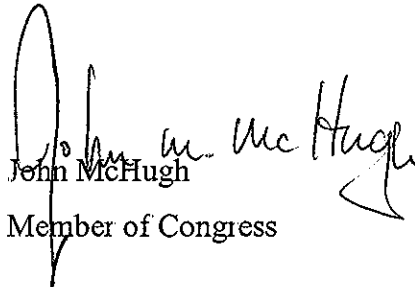


James P. McGovern
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Gary Ackerman

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John McHugh

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Bart Gordon

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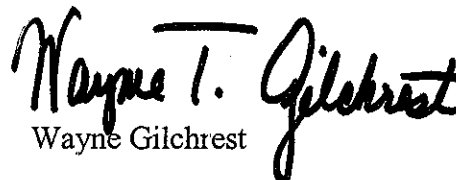
George Miller

Member of Congress



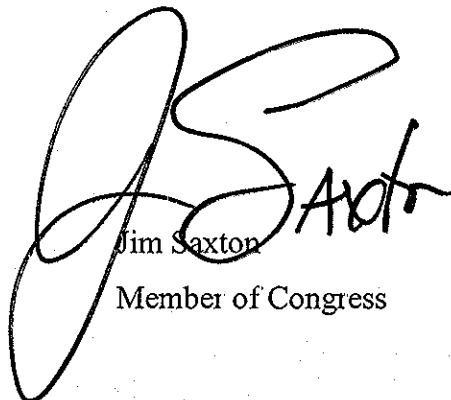
Donald Payne

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Wayne Gilchrest

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Jim Saxton

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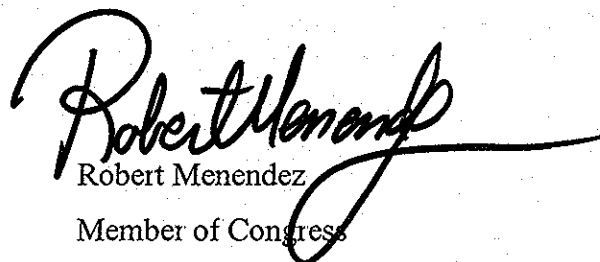
Rosa DeLauro

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Robert Andrews

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Robert Menendez

Member of Congress



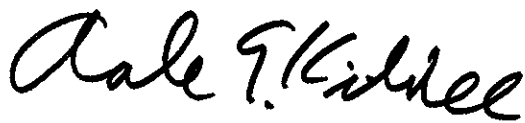
Barney Frank

Member of Congress



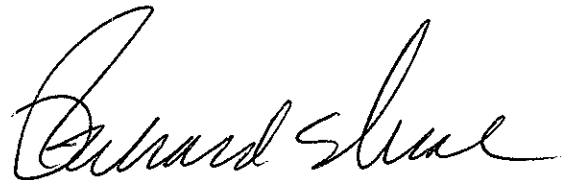
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Dale E. Kildee

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Richard E. Neal

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Sue Kelly

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Rick Boucher

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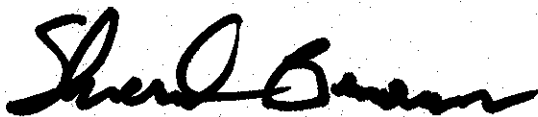
Tim Holden

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Bernard Sanders

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Sherrod Brown

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Sherwood L. Boehlert

Member of Congress



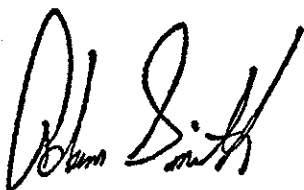
Patrick J. Kennedy

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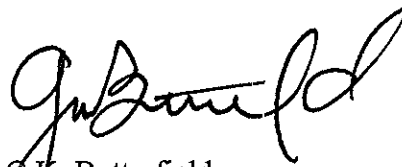
James R. Langevin

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Adam Smith

Member of Congress



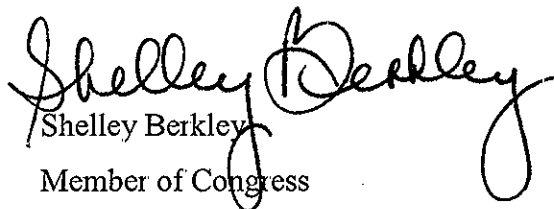
G.K. Butterfield

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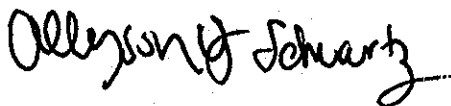
Mark Udall

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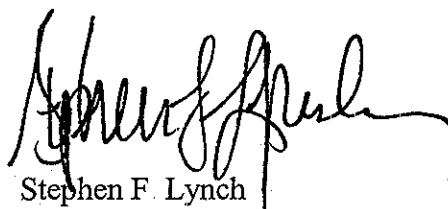
Shelley Berkley

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Allyson Y. Schwartz

Member of Congress



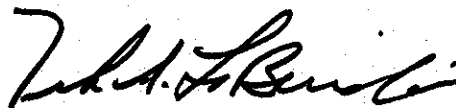
Stephen F. Lynch

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Mike Ferguson

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Frank LoBiondo

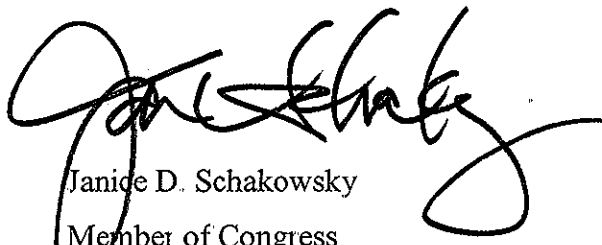
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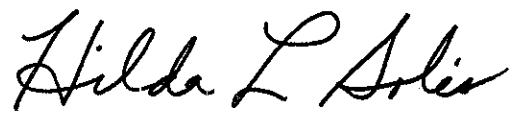
Jim Matheson
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Jim Cooper
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Janice D. Schakowsky
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Hilda L. Solis
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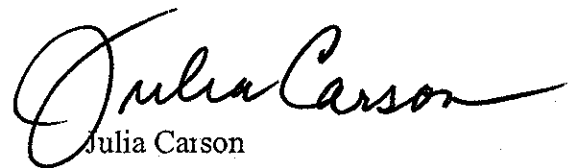
Betty McCollum
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Ronald Kind
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Scott Garrett
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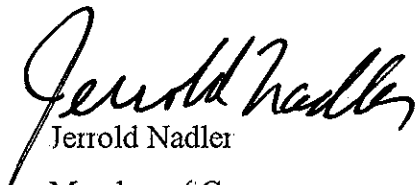
Julia Carson
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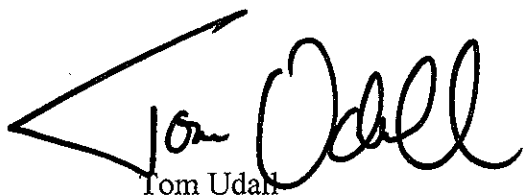
Lois Capps
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Shelley Moore Capito
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Jerrold Nadler
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Nancy Johnson
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Tom Udall
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Michael Capuano
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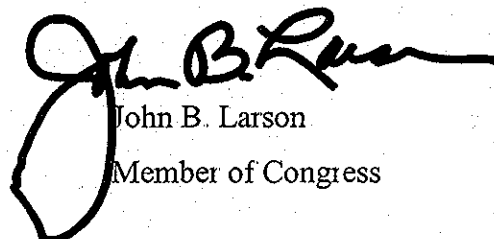

Ron Lewis
Member of Congress

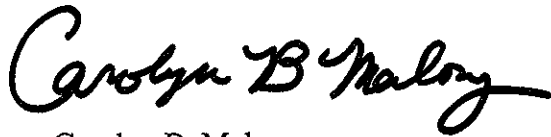

Earl Blumenauer
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Gene Green
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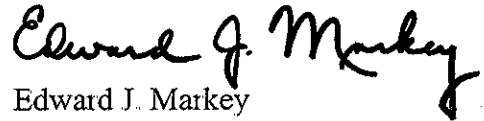

James Oberstar
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William J. Pascrell, Jr.
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John B. Larson
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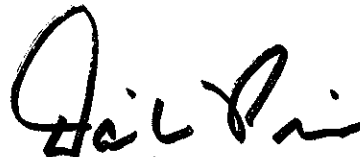
Carolyn B. Maloney
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Edward J. Markey
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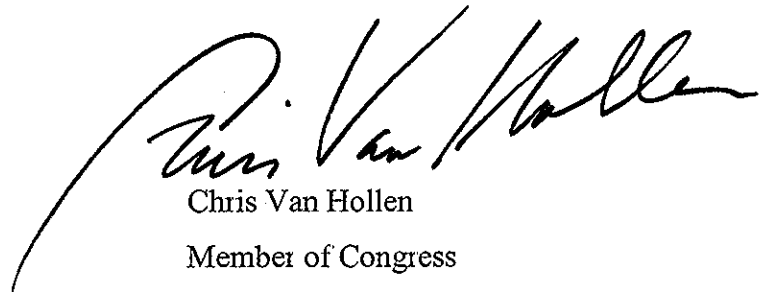
Ellen O. Taucher
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David Price
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John D. Dingell
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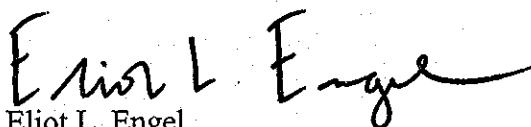
Chris Van Hollen
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William D. Delahunt
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Brad Miller
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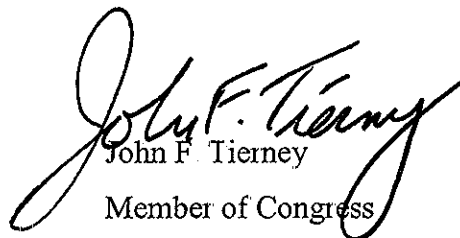



Eliot L. Engel
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Bart Stupak
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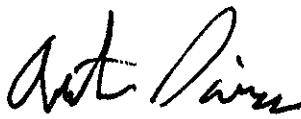

Carolyn McCarthy
Member of Congress

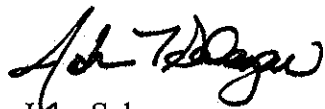

John F. Tierney
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Robin Hayes
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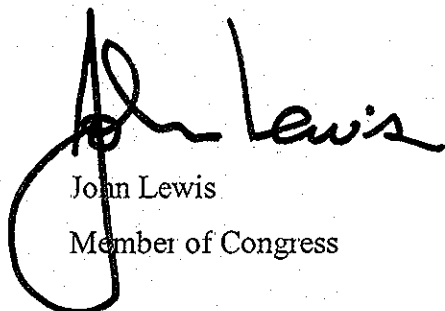

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Lincoln Davis
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Artur Davis
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John Salazar
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Donna M. Christensen
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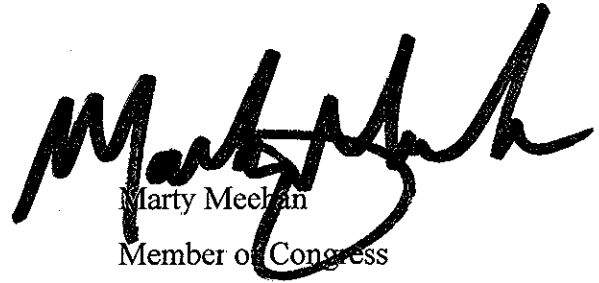

John Lewis
Member of Congress


Mike Rogers
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Edolphus Towns

Member of Congress



Marty Meehan

Member of Congress



Barbara Lee

Member of Congress



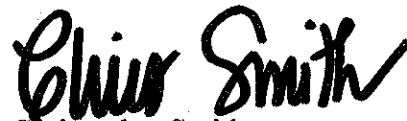
Steve Pearce

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Michael N. Castle

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Christopher Smith

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John Barrow

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Michael Fitzpatrick

Michael G. Fitzpatrick
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